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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PUNTLAND ADMINISTRATION PROMISES TO
RE-INSTATE VOA SOMALIA SERVICE

REF: NAIROBI 2116

1. (SBU) Summary: Following a series of telephone conversations with Puntland Administration officials since the October 1 decision to ban Puntland FM radio stations from carrying the Voice of America's (VOA) Somalia Service (reftel), Puntland President Faroole's Chief of Staff October 9 called Somalia Unit to report that VOA Somalia Service would be re-instated. He nevertheless urged the USG to do what it could to combat what he said was the bias in VOA's reporting on events in Puntland and he continued to worry about what he said was the unrepresentative clan composition of VOA's Puntland staff. End summary.

2. (SBU) A series of telephone conversations with Puntland Administration officials since the October 1 decision to ban FM radio stations in Puntland from broadcasting VOA Somalia Service programming and to forbid certain Somalia Service journalists from working for VOA in Puntland, seemed to produce on October 9 a decision to allow VOA Somalia Service to resume broadcasting in Puntland. The President's Chief of Staff, with whom Somalia Unit had been in touch earlier, October 9, called to thank the Embassy for participating in a Puntland-related event in Minneapolis during the week of October 12 and to announce, as a "good will gesture," that VOA Somalia Service Puntland would be allowed to resume broadcasting.

3. (SBU) The Chief of Staff nevertheless insisted that the Puntland Administration's complaints about biased coverage (reftel) remained, and that they should be addressed by the USG. The unrepresentative clan composition of VOA's Puntland staff should be remedied as well, he said.

4. (SBU) Comment: The Chief of Staff did not specify exactly when the ban would be lifted, and did not say if the Administration's decision extended to allowing the banned VOA journalists to resume work. Embassy intends to call the affected journalists during the week of October 12 and will report on the implementation of the Puntland Administration's decision.
HOZA